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WAR FOOD ADMINISTRATION
Office of Distribution
Washington 25, D. C.

July 1944

FACT SHEET ON NEED TO CONSERVE PAPER BAGS

The Problem:

For the second quarter of 1944, total production of kraft wrapping paper and paper bags used for carrying foodstuffs will be about 11 percent less than for the first quarter, and approximately 23 percent less than for the second quarter of 1943. Furthermore, 1943 production was approximately 20 percent below that of 1942, a "normal" year. The present and prospective shortage of these materials threatens to become a serious bottleneck in the distribution of foodstuffs to civilians unless both retailer and consumer cooperate in alleviating the situation.

Why the Shortage:

Since 1941 consumption of pulpwood - the primary raw material used in the manufacture of paper and paperboard - has been at a higher rate than imports and domestic production, with the result that inventory is now down to about three-fourths of normal. There is a shortage of manpower in the woods to cut the pulpwood and trucks used in hauling pulpwood out of the woods are wearing out. Since truck allocations began in March 1942, the pulpwood industry has received about 12 percent of its normal truck requirements.

Before the war, we imported a part of our pulpwood from Canada; a part of our wood pulp from Canada, Norway, Sweden and Finland; and the bulk of our newsprint from Canada. The war cut off our wood pulp supply from Scandinavia and has reduced our supply of pulpwood, wood pulp, and newsprint from Canada.

War Needs Come First:

Packing and packaging of supplies for shipment to men on the fighting fronts are fully as important as producing the supplies themselves. Clothing, equipment, and food are useless if the packages carrying them fail to protect them in transit. Every piece of equipment has to be individually wrapped in waterproof paper, usually in triple layers. Smoke and explosive shells for 4.2 inch chemical mortars are individually wrapped and then placed in boxes with waterproof liners.

It takes 25 tons of blueprint paper to make a plan for a battleship. Each Signal Corps radio set takes 7 pounds of kraft paper, 3 pounds of book paper. Seven hundred thousand different kinds of items are shipped to the Army - and they're paper-wrapped or boxed. More than 8,000 tons of paper are consumed every year by the Chemical Warfare Service for waterproofing overseas shipments. The entire output of one paper mill is not enough to keep up with the demands of storage depots alone.

Strictist Economy Needed:

According to the War Production Board, retailers of the country will have less than half of their usual supply of wrapping paper and paper bags. The strictist possible economy is the use of these items is necessary if all types of goods, including food, are to be moved into the hands of civilian users. One new bag or piece of wrapping paper must do the work of three or four available before this country went to war. Unless available wrapping supplies are extended to the limit, many stores

will be completely out of bags and paper for indefinite periods.

New Techniques in Order:

If current allocations of paper bags and wrappings are to go around, stores and their customers must cut down radically on the use of these materials. Many articles will have to be accepted unwrapped by the customer; purchases from different departments of the store will all have to be put in one bag; merchandise already wrapped or boxed, such as bread, cereals, soap products, coffee, carton eggs, etc., should be taken 'as is.' In addition, customers should carry shopping bags or baskets, and reuse paper bags whenever possible.

Customers Can Help:

Food store customers can help their grocers by:

1. Bringing their own shopping baskets or bags, or reusing their OWN paper bags.
2. By not demanding that articles already wrapped be packaged a second time.
3. By accepting several items that can be safely packed together in one bag instead of several bags, such as fruit or vegetables.

Grocers Have Job to Do:

The greatest saving of bags can be effected at the check-out stands in the grocery store. Here, grocers and their employees can:

1. Use the smallest bag possible, packing it well so that every bag carries a full load. Avoid using separate bags for each item.
2. Urge customers to bring shopping and paper bags to carry their purchases.
3. Not wrap or bag packaged articles unless really necessary.
4. Not use a bag within a bag except when absolutely essential.
5. Eliminate wrapping on truck deliveries where added protection is unnecessary.
6. Save and use all boxes and wrapping materials received from supplies.
7. Not burn paper -- salvage it.

Salvage Must Continue:

The best way for both retailer and consumer to get more paper bags and wrappings is, of course, to collect more waste paper. Late in May 1943, when waste paper inventories took a sharp drop, the Salvage Division of WPB organized its second campaign to collect waste paper, emphasizing the need for brown waste paper and old brown paper bags. In early July, the paper situation became so critical that the drive widened to make collections of all types of waste paper. Paper salvage went from 499,000 tons in September 1943 to 533,000 tons in January 1944. The goal was then set at 667,000 tons per month or 8,000,000 tons a year.

Local salvage committees will arrange for picking up waste paper from retailers and individual consumers. All boxes and wrapping materials received from suppliers should be saved and proper care taken of existing supplies to avoid waste and damage.